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Quarters



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# Four Quarters

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The Holly Tree, poem by Jean Wiggins .....	2
Running Away to Nothing, story by Ken Gaertner .....	3
On a Pompeian Young Man's Head, poem by Martin Robbins .....	11
Baseball's Grand Tour: 1913-1914, article by John P. Rossi .....	12
Orchids, poem by Susan Irene Rea .....	19
Your Arms, poem by Konstantinos Lardas .....	19
To Market, poem by J. B. Goodenough .....	20
Hex, poem by J.B. Goodenough .....	21
Alberta's Story, story by Mary Clearman .....	22
Schuylkill County, poem by Louis McKee .....	29
poem for John Logan, poem by Anne Maxwell .....	30
About Frogs, story by Ed Kratz .....	31
Old Man at Nightfall, poem by Carole Stone .....	35
A Wake, poem by Tom Ott .....	36
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# The Holly Tree

JEAN WIGGINS

The  
holly tree  
in the neigh-  
bor's yard across the  
street with-  
stood an attack  
this week of sparrows, squealing,  
squawking, a cacophony  
of sound, swirling, covering  
the tree

like so many dun ornaments,  
biting off the berries, then  
flying in wide circles  
around the tree.

Were they in some kind of  
protest or war that I  
couldn't understand?

Or was it just a robust  
social occasion? Maybe a show  
of force to invaders. Whatever  
it was, it was only moments long.

When they left, the holly tree settled  
herself again, somewhat shaken  
by the ordeal, moved  
her green boughs in the  
breeze to see  
that all was well.

Fastidious,  
she centered herself,  
lifted her graceful  
hands and  
prayed:

O  
cool  
green  
soul

# Running Away To Nothing

KEN GAERTNER

**A**RTIE HAD THE biggest belly I'd ever seen on a man. It swayed in front of him like a badly loaded wheelbarrow, and his thin arms grasped its sides as though he was trying to steer himself. The last thing I expected was for him to try out for our bowling team. But damn if he didn't bowl good. He'd straighten his back, that belly like a sack of wet leaves would sway under his upraised ball, and when his flying body stopped dead at the foul line his belly would follow the ball towards the pins for about three inches then sway gracefully to the side as he turned and hollered "get in there!" He had the best average on our team, one forty-three, which wasn't all that much, but considering I was next best with a one twenty-nine average, he was a genuine live star in the midst of clinkers. So when he started running around with Sarah Wainwright and missed both Tuesday and Friday matches we were really disappointed. Even if we hadn't lost eight points and dropped into fourth place we'd have been concerned. Sarah was only sixteen and Artie was forty-seven, and Sarah was the daughter of the owner of the Tool and Die shop where we worked, and her father Val was a flesh and blood boiler, a 220/100 blood pressure type who was going to raise all kinds of hell when he found out.

Artie ran a lift truck on the shipping dock. That's where he met Sarah. She started working in the office over summer and had to bring out bills of lading for him to sort out and put on a spindle so the trucks would get loaded right and the stuff delivered where it was supposed to get delivered. I don't know why they fell for each other. She wasn't that bad looking. She could have found somebody her own age easy enough. She had thick legs and small breasts, and already wore glasses over sort of dull eyes, but her skin was as soft and white as dandelion fuzz and she was so clean the dust on the shipping dock seemed to part before her when she walked out, and there was a faint smell of cinnamon you'd smell when she walked by that would filter right through all the rubble you'd breathed that

day.

Actually although we pretended to be worried we were glad they gave us something to talk about. We knew Sarah's old man would raise hell and that Artie didn't stand a chance, but the excitement was still there like there was when Ali used to fight someone that didn't even belong in the ring with him. There was less talk of bowling and fishing and a lot of laughing about just what Val Wainwright would do to Artie, though we didn't really want any harm to come to Artie. Or if we were tired of laughing we'd talk serious and worry whether Artie would have to quit his job. Our union steward said no way, but unions can't stop everything that's going to come down, especially when a father and his daughter's involved.

Val Wainwright got back from Miami on a Friday and showed up at the plant before going home, but it was on the afternoon shift so none of us were there, including Sarah or Artie. He wouldn't have noticed anything between them anyway. It wasn't like they carried on with each other in the shop. It'd take him awhile to figure it out.

We wondered if Artie was screwing Sarah. Course we knew he was. You wonder about stuff like that out of politeness, not curiosity. God, if he knocked her up what the hell would come of it then? I was a little scared about what would happen to Artie. I'd grown to like him some since he joined the bowling team. Before that he'd always seemed kind of dumb and moody, like he expected you to put him down, but letting you know if you did he was going to be unpleasant about it. Anyway, he wasn't like that at all if he knew you weren't going to mess with him. Although he still kept his secrets. We didn't really care about him enough to wonder what he did before he started working with us until he started going with Sarah. Then we realized we didn't know anything about him. If he'd been married before he hadn't said anything about it, and he never mentioned any kids but that didn't mean he didn't have a family somewhere. He started working with us about nine months ago and lived in a boarding room in the oldest part of town. You get a lot of transit workers in small machine shops, and you get so you don't even wonder much about what they did with their lives. They're never at the shop that long. You forget them a week after they've moved on. They always live in a single room. Sometimes in a frame, nondescript house, sometimes in our old hotel. Sarah's house was something else. All brick, two stories, with a two-car garage, and a lawn full of bushes and trees. What was she thinking of when she first visited Artie? There must have been the old painted radiator, the patched white sheets, stiff with bleach, and the paint from the peeling sash laying on the window sill. Not what she was used to at all.

Doesn't matter what she thought. Evidently her eyes were on Artie. You didn't have to be a shrink to notice Artie was as far away from her old man as it was possible to get. Man it really bugged me. What did he see in her? I know she was better stuff than he had ever had in his life, or would have, and she wasn't bad looking like I said, but he must have shook his head to himself. What the hell was he trying to nail down? Wasn't its craziness staring him in the face? What I'm trying to get at is—didn't he see he was making a fool out of himself, really making a fool out of himself, and how could he stand seeing himself as a fool without turning away from it? But hell I can't put him down too hard—what man hasn't chased what made him foolish, panting so hard he couldn't hear his buddies laughing around him?

**I**T TOOK VAL Wainwright a week to find out. Nobody, including myself, knows for certain how he found out. A lot of stories went around. I think Sarah told him. Or made her feeling for Artie so obvious that her father got suspicious and made it his business to find out. Most of the team thought his secretary told him after he got a whiff of what was going on. That's what we pretty much agreed on after we had time to mull it over good. But things happened so fast at first that the wildest guesses were said right out.

After it got out, Sarah quit coming to work. We all figured her father wouldn't let her come. Artie kept coming. But he didn't show up to bowl that Friday, and he went back to being defensive and real quiet. Except there was some new pain in his eyes, and more life inside him, and it gave his bland face character, etched some deep lines at the corner of his mouth, and his cheekbones stuck out and got shadows underneath as though they were there all the time buried in his face just waiting for the right piece of bad news to bring them out. We all felt his tension, wondered when he'd quit and just disappear, and when he didn't we couldn't help but notice that Val Wainwright was coming out to the dock like he was in charge of more than a factory. He had this round, greasy head set on a round, powerful body; he liked to roll his sleeves up and show his powerful forearms. He didn't say anything about Sarah quitting. And he gave us the impression he didn't give a shit what we were saying, just for us to do our jobs.

Although Artie refused to be run off there was no piss and vinegar in his walk, no courage in his face. Val made it a point to push himself into Artie's space but never like he was doing it on purpose because he didn't want to give Artie that much notice. That's probably why he didn't fire Artie or get that serious about running him off.

Artie seemed to be trying to work himself up, but standing up to

sombody and making them do what he wanted was so new to his experience that all he was able to do was look straight at Mr. Wainwright when he came around, and not respond too quickly to his demands for a shipping count, or jump too fast to find a lost bill of lading.

Once I thought they were gonna get in a fight. Linda, who ran the machine next to mine, put her hand on my arm and said "oh no." I quit working and watched. Artie had that big belly, but his arms had little slack muscles that looked prematurely old. He got enough exercise, even using the lift truck for most of the loading, but his muscles still stayed soft, and he didn't have any healthy color to speak of, while Val Wainwright still had the Florida sun all bottled up in his skin like it was a rare wine and he was aging it. He played tackle years ago at the University of Michigan, and Artie didn't look like he had the strength to carry the water buckets out to the huddle. But once Val stopped at his shipping desk and while rifling through the bills of lading he knocked a whole pile of bills on the floor and didn't even bother to notice what he did. Artie's face got all tense like a kid who's mad at a teacher, or more like you look the first time you're gonna fight, and you're screwing up that terrible face to try and help the anger beat down the fear of getting hurt, and you end up paralyzed hoping that rotten face you're making convinces the world you're not a coward. Course you could get the shit knocked out of you then and sometimes you did, and even sometimes you found out you were better than you thought and you knocked shit out of somebody yourself. But no way was Artie gonna kick Val's ass. Val didn't see Artie glaring, his muscles tightening up but hardly swelling at all. Artie caught me looking at him, and he sneered and turned away as though I had witnessed him winning some game over Val. I hoped he wouldn't start strutting around and making like he was more than he was because then he was gonna get fired in a hurry. Val wouldn't hit him because Val was rich and they know you don't hit people and give them a chance to sue you for a pile of money. Course Val was hotheaded and if Artie ever did lose his mind and strike out he'd let himself go knowing that even the rich are permitted self-defense. He'd really give it to Artie then. Linda took her hand away and said, "You better talk to Artie. He can't go around acting like that."

But like I said. I didn't talk to Artie about nothin' that meant anything. So I didn't plan on no confab, but I didn't tell Linda that 'cause she woulda said, "Of course you can," and pushed me towards him.

**J**UST LIKE HE READ Linda's mind he came over later and talked to me about some of the things that were on his mind. The



best he could. He sat on a low stack of pallets by my machine, bent over his big belly and tied his shoes. "He thinks he runs the world because he's got this tiny old shop here but there's a whole lot bigger than him in the world." He straightened up, his belly hardly moving. "I worked for a lot bigger than him. Worked a lot better too. I wouldn't do shit for him. If he wasn't paying union wages I wouldn't work for him at all. You can lower yourself by working for some people. My Pa told me that and it's turned out true. You can better yourself by working for some too. My Pa told me that too. He told me a lot of stuff." He looked kind of sour like his old man reminded him of more than truthful sayings. "If you knew what a fucker he was you wouldn't wanna work for him either." He looked around the shop insinuating that nobody would work for him if they knew what a fucker he was.

Actually Val wasn't that bad a boss. He didn't fight the union when we voted it in. He just quit throwing company parties twice a year, and no longer bought us beer to finish off some of the hot summer days. Now and then he'd laugh and call us "dumb shits" but it was always like what we did or joined couldn't be important enough for him to get worked up about. And a lot of us still wondered whether we did the right thing about voting the union in. He kept your thinking off balance like that.

One other time I thought Artie was going to get back at Val. Val had a way of standing free of the dirt and grime when he inspected a machine. He knew all about the damn things. He'd grown up with machines. But he dressed in a white shirt now with a row of gauges and pencils hanging from his shirt pocket, and he'd find two dry spots on the oily floor and with his legs spread awkwardly he'd bend around that machine looking at this and that and asking questions, then without ever touching it he'd tell them what they ought to try to get it running and nine out of ten times he was right and the millwright would feel foolish because he was getting two dollars an hour more than us to know how to keep them running and it took the boss to get them fixed right.

Anyway, one day Val was bent over checking a machine; he was pointing to the wire, suspecting either a broken ground or a short and Artie came up the aisle driving the fork truck with nothing on the forks and them sticking out about three feet off the floor and he was sitting up there haughty as a general, like somebody was driving him in a limo, and I saw him look over and see Val and his face hardened just like a general seeing a crowd of people he'd conquered and didn't respect and I got a tingle in my stomach 'cause I thought Artie was going to run those forks into Val. I imagined him hauling him out back and dumping him in the dumpster. But he didn't and when he drove past Val, Val looked over his shoulder

and hollered, "Lower those damn forks. Any damn fool knows you drive with them near the floor. How long you been driving that thing anyway?"

"Long enough," Artie said but he was by Val by then, and nobody heard him but me and Linda.

It got so every day Artie came by my machine. We got a ten minute break halfway through the morning and afternoon shifts and usually I'd run over to the automated snack bar and play euchre with some other machinists, but Artie would be there when the horn blew for break time and he'd sit on the pallets and retie his shoes and tell me more stuff about Val, or Mister Wainwright with a capital Mister as he used to call him. I asked him why he kept working there.

"She'll be back. You'll see. She's got a mind of her own. He don't own her. He just thinks he does."

I doubted that, but I didn't tell him. He was one of those guys who takes you into their confidence to tell you how things are, not to ask you advice on how to change them.

I don't like generally to be a selfish guy but Artie had been taking up my breaks for a couple of weeks, and I missed my euchre games even if they were foolish in a way, everybody shuffling and dealing fast as a stamping machine. And everybody would throw their cards out, and before the last card hit the trick would be grabbed up with the next card already on its way. It probably wasn't healthy to be that hyper but Artie was making me more hyper sitting on those damn pallets telling me Sarah would be back, and shit it wouldn't do him no good if she did come back, girls that young don't feel the same one day to the next even about kids their own age to say nothing about somebody like Artie.

We did get news about Sarah. One of Linda's girl friends worked in the beauty parlor and Mrs. Wainwright had her hair done there and she'd complain about Sarah to Jimmy the guy that owned the place. I guess they all complained to him and usually nobody paid attention because it wasn't about nothin' but Linda's girl friend did 'cause she knew Linda was interested. Mrs. Wainwright said it wasn't only Sarah, all kids seemed to be rebellious. She wanted to get Sarah the best professional help there was and she took Sarah to Detroit to a psychiatrist, the best there was she said, and would have driven Sarah there, the whole hundred miles, once a week, but Sarah wouldn't talk to the guy. She wanted to go to the Adult Mental Health Clinic in town and be treated by some woman that worked there. Not really even a doctor. Just a counselor of some sort. I agreed with Mrs. Wainwright. Sarah probably just wanted to make a fuss and fight against them for no good reason but then they did control her life an awful lot. They'd a felt they had to

because of Artie but my own feeling is that she wouldn't have even noticed Artie if they didn't run her life so much. But you never really know about things like this.

**A**ND ONE DAY Sarah did come back to work. Artie smiled quiet-like at me, not proud like he was putting me down, but more like he was surprised at being right and enjoyed the feeling.

Naturally we all watched Sarah to see how she'd act.

She didn't give us much clue to what she felt. She wasn't like a zombie, but she acted a lot shyer and not so much like she was snubbing us as if she hadn't ever met us. Artie smiled at her when she brought some bills out to the dock, and she kind of half-smiled back like women do when they don't want to encourage you but don't want to insult you either. It was the way the cheerleaders used to smile at the class losers at dances.

It didn't seem to bother Artie. He didn't seem to know the difference. It pissed me off. I hate to see a grown man act so dumb. But he probably didn't know the difference because no cheerleader had ever bothered even to smile at him.

Val came out when they were there, told Artie to take the fork truck out to the yard and move some old machinery so a truck could drop its trailer there and leave it for a week. It seemed simple enough, but he told Artie to do it in a way you'd tell a kid to turn the lights off and go to bed. Not even quite like that. We talked about it later and Linda said it the best. She said he treated Artie like he was a disease his daughter had been cured of.

It never occurred to me the first day but it came out later and it really was obvious that Sarah was on some kind of drug, I don't care if they do call it medication. Her eyes still shone but they were more watery and she took a long time understanding what you said to her. Not that I talked to her, but I could hear others talk to her. And she didn't wear that real nice perfume anymore. She didn't wear nothin', I guess, because you couldn't smell her when she went by. And it was killing Artie, her acting so strange even if he didn't let it show. He didn't have a lot of worldly sense so he couldn't adjust like most people. Almost anybody I know would have got mad and acted as though she did didn't bother him none. But not Artie. He'd smile that sickening smile at her and be all alert like my damn dog when he thinks I might take him for a walk and he'd wait for her to give him that familiar look, but she never did, and he'd come over and plop his ass down on those pallets and try to convince me she'd given him the high sign one way or the other. Said he could tell even if I couldn't. And I told him he looked like a damn dog begging and that she was gonna pull him by his ears one day and make him yelp, that's how intimate she was gonna become. He just laughed and

said she wouldn't do nothin' like that. Not in front of the shop anyway. He laughed I tell you. And he the sick joke of the whole place.

Tuesday night we bowled the first place team and split with them due to Artie bowling two hundred twelve the last game. Otherwise we'd a lost four points. That was one of the curious things about the whole hullabaloo. The worse Artie got put down, the more he lost out of life, the better he bowled. He must have raised his average twenty points. It made you wonder if he needed life to insult him so he could do things right.

The next morning he didn't show up for work. I was so relieved I didn't even bother wondering where he might have been. I was too damn tired of giving up my coffee breaks. In fact I'll admit, even if it ain't charitable, that I'd have been glad if he quit for good. I didn't like guys to talk about their love life when I was in high school and certainly none of my friends now ever talk about it, and it was ninety percent of what Artie talked about and I was sick of it. You don't get time and a half for loving more than you're supposed to, so you know there ain't no profit in listening to it.

I got euchred by Eddie with the left bower at coffee break and when he snatched up the trick he said, not even meaning it, "What'd Artie do, run off with the boss's daughter?" I hadn't noticed till then that Sarah hadn't been out on the dock that day. Val hadn't been here either, but that happened a lot and didn't mean much.

I asked Linda what she thought and she said she thought Sarah probably had another breakdown as anybody could see she wasn't quite right. She didn't have any ideas where Artie might of been.

**W**E HAD TOO MUCH to do to worry about Artie and Sarah and we didn't even talk about it at lunch hour. But when I came in the next morning Linda called me right over.

"They did it," she said. "They ran away."

I felt sad. What was them two supposed to do out in the world?

"How'd Artie get her to go?," I asked.

"I don't know how much of it is true," she said. "Probably most of it. Annie usually knows what she'd talking about. I guess that mental health girl set it up. She thought the family was making Sarah sick. I guess Sarah must have known she could get her way with that girl. That's why she wouldn't talk to the shrink in Detroit. Anyway now they're trying to fire the girl. But I bet Sarah couldn't care less. Them rich girls don't know what it is to lose a job. Or not get their own way. I swear if the mother is anything like her or her father that family is in awful shape."

Everybody was talking about it. We didn't even play euchre at coffee break. What really happened between Artie and Sarah was

getting all twisted around. Everybody was adding to the story and saying stuff about them that never happened. I got on one of the guy's case when he got making too much fun of Artie, walking around like he was holding up a big belly, saying "keep looking, Sarah, it's under there someplace." Some things at some times aren't funny.

You get like a family when you work together all the time and I could tell everybody was excited over what happened, though none of us really felt it was any of our business. But you could feel the nervousness all through the shop. Val came in in the afternoon, and nobody quit what they were doing or looked his way at all but you knew everybody knew he was there. And Val did too. He walked out on the dock and checked the yard out back to see what trailers were dropped where and what orders still had to be loaded. He rolled his round shoulders like he had some energy he'd like to use but couldn't. He stood awhile then walked back to his office. It seemed he walked out there to let us know nothing had changed with him. Of course it had. He knew it and we knew it. We saw he couldn't have everything his own way. We all knew you couldn't have everything your own way all the time, but when you get around somebody like Val you forget life treats him the way it does you until something like this comes alone to drive it home.

I sat down on the pallets where Artie used to sit. Why did she want him? That still bugged me. Why in the hell would she want him? I bet that Detroit shrink would never have figured it out. I know there's a lot in life that I'll never understand. Nor Val either I'll bet.

## On a Pompeian Young Man's Head

MARTIN ROBBINS

His name and family unknown,  
Bronze sockets stare, corneas  
Stolen like hopes.

Our looks pry  
At this mouth that prayed to Fortuna  
For life after death.

His calm  
Holds us between tragic sky  
That flamed death and the pursed lips  
Of a night which held its breath  
Against air turned to poison.

# Baseball's Grand Tour: 1913-1914

JOHN P. ROSSI

**I**N THE FUTURE the year 1913 was to take on symbolic meaning. It was the last year of real peace that the world would know. And it marked the end of an era of innocence: never again would the West face the future with the assurance and self-confidence that characterized the pre-World War I generation.

In the United States this innocence was reflected throughout American society. The number-one best seller that year was *Pollyanna*; Woodrow Wilson took office in March promising an administration that would help "the men who are on the make," and Hollywood was just beginning to become the center of America's dream industry. But already there were signs that this innocence was doomed. 1913 saw the Income Tax amendment to the Constitution, and it was also the year of the New York Armory Show that pointed to a new flowering of American art.

In those years before the world went mad the United States was a one-sport nation: baseball had a virtual monopoly of professional sports in America. Aside from boxing, which was considered disreputable by the public, there was no serious professional competition to it. Attendance was growing yearly, and new stadiums were going up everywhere. In a little more than a dozen years since the founding of the American League, and the decade since the World Series began, baseball had taken hold of the imagination of the American public.

During 1912 some of the baseball magnates decided to organize a world tour to show off the sport much in the way that Teddy Roosevelt had demonstrated America's new-found might by sending the great White Fleet around the world. It was not the first tour by the national game, but it was the most ambitious undertaken by the still young sport. (The initial exposure of baseball to the non-American world dated back to 1888, when Albert Spalding took a group of players around the world.) What better way to demon-

strate our superiority and flex our muscles as a great power than to show off a sport that was uniquely American? The guiding geniuses behind this tour were John McGraw and Charles Comiskey. McGraw, a former great player, was one of the dominant figures in the maturing of baseball. He had managed the Giants since 1902 and had won the National League pennant in 1913 for the third straight year, although his team lost the World Series to the Philadelphia Athletics 4 games to 1. Comiskey, the owner of the Chicago White Sox, was a big Irishman who had helped establish the American League as an equal to the older National Division. He, like McGraw, was a fine player in his day and is credited with being the first man to position himself off the first base bag and thus give more maneuverability to the defense. Comiskey's White Sox had a poor year in 1913, finishing fifth with a 78-74 record.

Both McGraw and Comiskey saw the idea of a world tour as a way of making some real money. Barnstorming after the season ended was a common way of adding to the players' salaries without taxing the ownership. In those days salaries averaged somewhere between \$1500 and \$8000 a year for the best. (Then, as now, the average annual salary for workers in all industries was lower: \$675.) Even though baseball salaries were relatively high, ball-players were always interested in supplementing their pay. Some went on the stage; others worked in a variety of jobs that reflected their generally working-class origins, i.e., bartender, farmer, plumber, carpenter, etc. The better known players and managers could make big money in the off-season. McGraw, for example, once made the princely sum of \$2500 a week on the Keith Vaudeville Circuit lecturing on "Inside Baseball."

McGraw and Comiskey's idea was to first barnstorm across the United States to the West Coast, where they would then board ship for the Orient. From the Orient they would play their way around the world, ending in Great Britain some five months later. It was an ingenious idea and the first time baseball would receive real international attention. Spalding, still alive, gave the tour his enthusiastic blessing. "Twenty-five years from now," he said, "baseball will be the international game. Every civilized country will know or hear about the American game before the journey is over, and as it already has had a splendid start in Japan, the Phillippines and Australia, the sport is certain to get a big boom."

From an organizational standpoint the tour was a major undertaking. The details were in the hands of a shrewd public relations man, Richard Bunnell. Once the concept was approved in 1913, Bunnell went about hyping up the public. He reported that the world was waiting breathlessly to see American baseball. Even the Vatican was drawn into Bunnell's publicity. In July, 1913 the New

York *Times* carried a dispatch from Europe, where Bunnell was putting the finishing touches to the tour. Bunnell had discovered that Cardinal Merry del Val, the Papal Secretary of State, was an ardent baseball fan who knew all the teams in both leagues. He told Bunnell that he knew enough about baseball from his stay in the United States to umpire a game. At a later interview with the Pope, Pius X, Bunnell reluctantly had to admit the Pope was ignorant of baseball.

McGraw and Comiskey lined up a distinguished group of players for the tour. Most of them were drawn from their own teams, but they were supplemented with stars from other teams in both major leagues. The touring party numbered close to 100, including players, managers, owners, umpires and reporters. Some wives and children went along. Among the best known players for the National League were Christy Mathewson, who won 25 games in 1913; John "Chief" Meyers, a .312 hitter; Ivy Wingo, a journeyman catcher; Fred Merkle, the famous goat of the 1911 World Series; and Jim Thorpe, the most famous athlete in America. The American Leaguers included "Wahoo" Sam Crawford, a .314 hitter; Tris Speaker, one of the greatest centerfielders in baseball history; George "Buck" Weaver, later a member of the banned Black Sox crew who threw the World Series of 1919; and Herman "Germany" Schaefer, a great baseball clown who once stole second base and then turned around on the next pitch and stole first, a play which led to a rule change making such a steal illegal. Bill Klem, later baseball's best known umpire, went along to officiate.

The American part of the tour began on October 19th, shortly after the World Series ended. The two teams barnstormed across the Western United States playing some thirty games before fans starved for a chance to see major league baseball. The players traveled aboard a special train equipped with a large library, a barber shop, and special stenographers for the sportswriters. Considering the reputation of the baseball players of the pre-World War I era the club car probably received more attention than the library. It took about a month to complete the American phase of the tour. The gate receipts were good: \$97,000 was taken in, and each player received a check for \$550. When the teams reached the West Coast some eight players, of whom Mathewson was the most famous, dropped out of the tour not wishing to tie themselves down for the entire winter. A highly representative group of players remained, including such National Leaguers as Hans Lobert, Merkle, Wingo, and Thorpe, who had just finished his rookie year in baseball. The American League contingent was more impressive since Tris Speaker, Crawford, Weaver and Schaefer decided to continue on the tour.



Between November, 1913 and February, 1914 the barnstorming group, now reduced to seventy people including wives and children, played its way across Asia, the Middle East, and parts of Europe. This phase of the tour was largely uneventful except for a very rough crossing of the northern Pacific and a smallpox scare in Hong Kong. The two teams generally played to receptive, if slightly confused, crowds just about everywhere, as Bunnell had laid the ground work for the tour perfectly. In Japan they defeated the best Japanese teams, humiliating the highly regarded Keio University team by a score of 16-3. American diplomatic agents urged on by Secretary of State William Jennings Byran helped smooth the way for the touring players. Wherever there was a sizable American community, as in Manila, the tour was particularly well received. Probably the most successful and surprising phase of the barnstorming was the visit to Australia. Games in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney were well attended, with a crowd of 15,000 attending the game in Melbourne. The Australian press, however, was chauvinistic about baseball, comparing it unfavorably to cricket and soccer. They said that baseball lacked intensity and continuous interest and that it reminded them of a garden party, a rather unusual view of the American game in light of the roughhouse quality of pre-war baseball.

In Egypt in February the teams played two games before the Khedive, Abbas II, for which in the words of *Spalding's Official Baseball Guide*, "The entire white population turned out." McGraw took the advantage of his stay to journey up the Nile. The group also toured the various tourist sights and went out to see the Pyramids, where the ballplayers had their pictures taken dressed in their uniforms. Ivy Wingo and Steve Evans amused the photographers by tossing baseballs back and forth over the Sphinx. The New World had come to the Old with a vengeance.

From Egypt the group moved on to the last phase of the tour, stopping briefly in Naples, and then traveling north to Rome where rain prevented the two teams from playing. Cardinal del Val, true to his word to Bunnell the previous year, arranged a private audience for the group with the Pope. Italian customs officials were dubious about baseball and made the players put on a brief demonstration of the game to show that it was not a brutal blood sport. The most unusual development in Italy, however, was an attack of the traveller's trot which struck down Comiskey. It was reported in the press with deadly seriousness that he blamed it on drinking ice water and nothing stronger. The Continental phase of the tour ended in Paris where a baseball game was played and the touring party met a variety of French dignitaries including President Poincaré.

THE LAST STOP, and highlight, of the baseball tour occurred in England, where the teams arrived on February 23rd in the midst of a heavy rainstorm. The tour had been a critical and financial success so far, but the Americans were determined to end this most extensive exposure of baseball with a glowing success in the capital city of the world's greatest power. This was not Britain's first exposure to the American sport, but it was certainly the first time that baseball had been given such a massive build-up in the country.

The American party was received with great cordiality by the British public and press, and by the very large American community in Britain. The latter group, swelled by some of the 100,000 American tourists who visited Britain in 1913-1914, hoped that baseball would not only capture the imagination of the British but would also show how skilled were American athletes. The *Times* reported that many Americans believed that baseball was on trial with the cricket-loving British public. These Americans hoped that the game would prove exciting and dramatic. One must not forget that this was only an innocent age but that it was also an age of excessive nationalism. Even the normally staid New York *Times* hoped that the baseball game would be a success and show up cricket, which it said was being ruined by high scores, drawn matches, and the afternoon tea ritual.

For the first few days in London the American players behaved like typical tourists. They spent part of February 24th seeing the major sights: Westminster Abbey, The Tower of London, The Houses of Parliament, and the British Museum. That night they were given tickets to George M. Cohan's hit show, *Broadway Jones*. The next night they attended a performance of Israel Zangwill's play *The Melting Pot*, which was then explaining the complexities of American life to a bewildered British public.

The last game of the tour was scheduled for Wednesday, February 26th at the Chelsea Football Grounds. Bunnell's hype had worked. All tickets for the game, approximately 30,000, had been sold. But the greatest coup for the tour organizers was the announcement that King George V would not only attend the game but would also throw out the first ball. This guaranteed that game would be both a commercial and social success. It also guaranteed extensive press coverage, something that had not always been the case elsewhere. The list of people who, following the King, decided to attend the game reads like a Who's Who of British society: Mrs. Winston Churchill, Lord Granville, the Duke of Devonshire, Admiral Kiple. The American ambassador Walter Hines Page led a huge American delegation.

Elaborate plans were laid for a special box for the King and his

party. A large area was screened off from the rest of the crowd. The king's box was draped in red cretonne, trimmed with palms, lilies, hyacinths, and narcissus. For seating comfort the box was furnished with Louis Quinze chairs: baseball had come along way from the 10¢ wooden bleacher seat of the typical American stadium. Jimmy Callahan, the sarcastic manager of the Chicago White Sox, took a jaundiced view of these preparations. A well-known supporter of Irish Home Rule, he recommended that a few holes be left in the screen in front of the king so that some balls could get through and awaken him to Ireland's plight. Fortunately this wasn't mentioned in the British press.

On the day of the game the crowd began gathering early. The baseball players dressed at their hotel and rode in open cars decked with silk American flags to the game through streets filled with bewildered Londoners. The game lived up to everything the Americans and their London-based fans had hoped for. It started with the King throwing out the first ball to Manager Callahan, who in turn passed it on to the starting pitcher, "Death Valley" Jim Scott. As the *New York Times* noted: "The national game will never know a greater play than that."

The last comment shows a certain ambivalence in the *New York Times's* reporting of the game. It so believed in the natural superiority of baseball over all other sports that it thought its mere exposure to the British would lead them to not only admire it but also adopt it. Thus the *Times* could not restrain its pride in the King's decision to attend the game; yet a certain obsequiousness toward royalty makes one wonder about the strength of the patriotic expression. Still, not only baseball but America's prestige was at stake, and they both passed an important test that day in London.

The game itself was filled with brilliant fielding, good pitching and some dramatic and timely hitting. The English audience, used to the slower pace of cricket, was amazed at speed of the pitching and sharpness of the hitting. It was also amused and somewhat confused by various aspects of the game. Everyone thought the umpire, Bill Klem, was brave to stand behind the catcher and absorb foul balls without complaining. They didn't know he had protection on underneath his blue serge suit. The King particularly enjoyed high fly balls and the grace of the players while hitting and fielding. He was mystified by the slang of the game. After Jim Thorpe swung and missed a pitch, an American fan yelled, "he's got a hole in the bat." This had to be explained to His Majesty. Ambassador Page kept the King informed on the intricacies of the game as well as instructing him how to keep score.

One wonders if among the various state papers of George V at Buckingham Palace there is included a box score of the game.

Future English historians will have a difficult time deciphering codes such as Thorpe, K, 5/4/3, -, =, etc. The details of the game put off some English observers. One newspaper reporter declared that he would never attend another game until he took a Berlitz course in baseball language.

The English found other aspects of the game confusing. Again from their cricket background many thought it was unfair that foul balls did not count. It was a shame, noted one English reporter, that a batter received no credit when the ball traveled so far, a sentiment many American ballplayers would share. The correspondent for the *Daily Mail* also wondered why the pitcher, Scott, "clasped the ball in both hands to his face as if offering an invocation." Imagine his shock if he ever discovered that Scott was "loading up," preparing to throw a spitball. Surely this would have removed any doubts the English might have had that the Americans were barbaric: no Englishman would spit on a cricket ball!

The game itself was close, a 2-2 tie going into the 9th inning. In the top of the 10th the Giants scored 2 runs to take the lead. In the bottom of the 10th with two out and Weaver on 2nd base, Crawford hit a home run to tie the score again. Finally in the 11th inning the American Leaguers won the game when Tommy Daly of the White Sox hit a home run. The crowd went home having seen a classic, exciting game of baseball. The fact that three homeruns had been hit in the game (Lobert had hit one earlier) was unusual for the dead ball era of baseball.

The American community in England and the tour planners waited breathlessly for the coverage given the game. The British press was kind but a trifle condescending in its evaluation. The prestigious *Times* complimented the Americans for their prowess, but it did not believe there was any real hope for the game in England. It was too esoteric, and cricket and soccer had too firm a hold on the loyalties of the English public. The *Daily News* editorialized at great length on the game, but like *The Times* it saw no hope for baseball gaining an English audience. "After yesterday's showing, baseball still remains and will remain an exclusively, peculiarly transatlantic dish, such as clams, crackers, and canvas back." The *Illustrated London News* labelled baseball as nothing more than "a glorified form of . . . rounders" which in its peculiar American form would have little appeal to the English.

The Americans, still a young and inexperienced people, had expected much more. They believed baseball, this uniquely Yankee game, would capture their English cousins. But such was not to be. The game was a passing success, but it failed to make a lasting impact on the English. Later baseball touring groups would largely by-pass England on the grounds that the game would not take hold

there.

On March 1st the American party left England aboard the great liner *Lusitania*. When some of them next returned to England that ship would lie at the bottom of the Irish Sea and they would be wearing a different kind of uniform.

## ORCHIDS

SUSAN IRENE REA

Our friend had taken us  
to see the orchids, their petals  
poised on angled stems.

*Phalaenopsis*.

He spoke their tongue. Sun fell  
across his gestures, blossoms leaning  
toward him. "In spring  
insects try to mate with these," he said.

Pointing at a delicate, blue,  
moth-like bloom, you laughed  
and said, "False loves."  
I caught your hand.

That night as we slept  
a greenhouse slowly rose over the room,  
concentrating rich beams of darkness,  
where you stood among empty stems  
reaching toward  
the tremor of pastel wings.

## Your Arms

KONSTANTINOS LARDAS

Your arms across my chest—  
swift oars that knife  
our naked seas.

Your pits,  
the calm, before and after—  
storms.

## To Market

J. B. GOODENOUGH

When her dolls grew .  
Taller than she was  
She slit them open,  
Dumped sawdust on the midden,  
Buried the skins.

She played house  
Under the back porch,  
Dressed in hand-me-downs  
From her little sister;  
Never came when called.

Nineteen, and no higher  
Than the gatepost:  
Her brother took bets  
She could milk faster  
Standing than on a stool.

Market-days she jog-trots  
To town on sow-back,  
Letting them all laugh.  
In her boot she carries  
A small knife.

# Hex

J. B. GOODENOUGH

Sunlight does not come  
Under the tree:  
Moss grows there.  
Moss grows up the trunk.  
If I touch your face  
Just once, dear face,  
There will be moss covering your mouth  
Like a handprint.

Rain pocks the mirror  
Of the pasture pond.  
The tadpoles  
Hide among the reeds.  
If I lead you by the hand  
Just once, my way,  
You could look down,  
See gold eyes.

In the woods  
When the moon goes by  
Twigs snap,  
The little twigs.  
If I take you  
Just once into my arms  
There will be a quick splintering.  
Small bones first.

# Alberta's Story

MARY CLEARMAN

**F**IFTY YEARS is not a long time, and some of these old sandstone buildings have stood on Main Street ever since I can remember, but the Empire Cafe is the only business in town that is older than I am. As I walk past the gift shop and bookstore that have replaced Kale's Veterinary Supply and pause with my hand on the door handle of the cafe, I am looking through the peeling "E" and "Crown" into my own reflection in the dark glass. When I work up my nerve, I can open the door and step off the sunlit pavement onto soft pine flooring and walk past the display case with its cigars and Life Savers under the rusty linoleum counter just as Father and I did every sale day and, unless Clay has beaten me to it, take one of the tables at the back where the faint rancid odor from the grill mingles with the smell of tobacco and spearmint to reassure me that something, at least, continues. And I might as well make up my mind to open the door as stand out here in the sun where Clay could come along any minute and leave me looking like a fool.

My reflection advances, grinning lumpishly, as I open the door, and disappears behind me only to reappear in the tarnished mirror behind the counter as I walk into the cafe. I avert my eyes too late not to see the dry frizz of hair under the Stetson and the sag of shirt and Levis above and below my belt. Fifty years have settled without warning, and quite chapfallen is how I look.

But nobody is in the back except two men in white Dacron shirts drinking coffee and going over the figures jotted on a paper napkin. They hardly glance up as I take my usual seat with my back to the wall. Of course Clay wouldn't be here at this time of day, the sale won't be over for hours. *Unless the crew takes a coffee break. Unless for some reason he isn't working the sale this afternoon,* I catch myself hoping, and cast around for a distraction. The menu, a typewritten sheet between limp gray plastic leaves, is wedged between the napkin dispenser and the salt and pepper shakers, and I think about ordering something to eat. A chicken-fried steak, perhaps. But it is too early in the afternoon to eat a heavy meal.

Debbie comes over to wipe the stains off the formica tabletop and set down a glass of water. "Are you having coffee, Alberta?" "Please."



I must have been about nine years old the first time Father brought me in the Empire Cafe and ordered a chicken-fried steak. Had we been to a 4-H meeting? A bull sale? There weren't many reasons why he would have taken me with him, which is why my memory of those times is so sharp. I wore a pair of brand-new Levis, so stiff I could barely bend my knees, and walked with dignity at Father's side. The cafe struck me with its grave air of men and their commerce, their unhurried comings and goings and pronouncements on the weather. It was *town*, what lay at the end of thirty miles of ruts leading in from the ranch, and it mattered. Sometimes even now I get a glimmer, a memory of a memory of how it felt to be driving into *town*, when I gear down at the familiar store fronts and cottonwood trees.

Debbie brings my coffee. "Are you going to order anything to eat, Alberta?"

"Oh, I don't know—" I think about consulting the menu, decide against it. "I guess just coffee."

Debbie slides her pad into her apron pocket and sits down to keep me company for a minute. "Wow, what a morning we had!" she sighs, taking a cigarette. "It can stay slow all afternoon for all I care."

"I suppose all the boys came in from the yards for lunch today?" I ask it idly, and it is only when Debbie looks away that I realize how my question sounded to her.

"I guess they got a slew of consignments this morning. The boys were saying they'd be lucky to finish loading cattle and come in for supper by midnight," she says. From the way she keeps her eyes on the match she is putting out, I understand what she is telling me, and I ought to be grateful when I am only flooded with shame that Debbie, young Debbie, would *know*.

Everybody knows. —*at her age? Alberta got just what she was asking for. After all, he only married her to get his hands on the ranch. She must have known that. And you can't fault him for it. Not really. What could she have done with it on her own? And she was no kind of a wife for him—*oh, I can hear them.

To shut out their echoes, I turn to Debbie. She is the only one of the Knutson girls to grow up with the looks and the calm of her grandmother. At one time I would never have believed she would—Debbie, so bashful that her sisters had to drag her into her first 4-H meeting by force, squirming red and unable to answer the judge when he asked her about her yearling. It's hard for country children to get over their shyness, I ought to know—but Debbie, at least, had her sisters to play with, and she went to a real school when the time came. Debbie's grandmother and I and a few others like Johnny Weir who grew up in the gumbo country before the roads were

graveled had only the 4-H meetings and the correspondence courses we studied at home, which probably taught us more about books, at that, than schools do now. But there is so much more to learn—

Debbie has learned; she's done just fine. She has been saving her tips and wages from the Empire for three years so she can go away to the state university this fall.

"Have you done your clothes-shopping yet?" I ask her, and her face lights up as she talks of the sweater and slacks she has put on layaway and the down parka she would have bought. "But it was a hundred and fifty dollars, and I couldn't manage it and the dormitory deposit. All freshmen have to live in the dorm," she explains. Her hands gesture in humorous resignation—she is, after all, a girl who has rented her own room and looked after herself through four years of high school—and I notice how much older her hands look than the rest of her.

"You make me almost ready to go off to college myself," I joke. I mean to joke, at least, but she takes me seriously.

"Oh, Alberta!" Her young face is suffused with sympathy. "I never knew you wanted to go to college—and you never had the chance, always the work on the ranch coming first."

"No, no! Really, Debbie. I meant to joke. All I ever wanted was the ranch."

But perhaps because she looks so doubtful, my words sound hollow to me even though I know they are true. For who would believe, after all, that the ranch was all I wanted? Clay didn't: *What's your story, Alberta? he asked me the first week he was on the place. How come you've hung around?*

"—just seems like it would be so lonely for you out there now." Debbie's eyes plead with me to take it in the spirit it is meant and not as meddling.

"Lonely? I wouldn't know what it means to be lonely," I scoff. Getting lonely wasn't a fashion in my day, or going off to college, either. Not that it necessarily is nowadays, from what I read. Debbie is behind the times, saving her tips for the state university because she is a country girl and has already come so far—and I hate to think what she may find there—but then I remember the small weather-beaten hands that are so at odds with the smooth brown hair and young face, and reassure myself that Debbie will do just fine.

**A** SHADOW FALLS on the door, and I look up to see the angle of a Stetson silhouetted against the bright sunlight and the line of shoulders that catches at my breath and draws the whole story so plainly across my face that Debbie has to avert her eyes. —*has she no shame, has she no pride? What did she expect, following him, that she would find in the granary? A man has a right to expect something*

*better than a bag of bones like Alberta. The truth is, she as good as drove him to it. After all, what kind of a poor excuse for a woman is she?—has anybody ever seen her in a dress?—and that house is a mess!—nobody's lifted a hand to clean it since her mother died—an* instant is enough to set the rumors ringing in my ears and my face hot and cold and then drain me of all but a disappointment as sharp as a bad taste in my mouth as I see that the light has deceived me. It is not Clay coming past the counter, but only Johnny Weir, and of course I am not disappointed but relieved.

"Alberta," says Johnny, unsurprised, for of course he had the advantage of coming in with his back to the light and being able to see who was sitting in back. Johnny hangs his hat on the back of a chair and eases himself down, while Debbie runs off after a glass of water and the coffee pot. Johnny watches her go. "She's the only one of those girls who's anything like her grandmother," he remarks.

"Debbie's getting prettier every day," I agree. But it isn't prettiness that makes me think of Lila. Forty years ago when I started 4-H, Lila and Johnny were the big kids in the club, and we all depended on Lila even then. Now Lila is gone, and Johnny is so stove-up in the hips that for an instant I could mistake his walk for Clay's, although Clay's broken bones come from the rodeo circuit and Johnny's from a lifetime of killing work on the ranch.

Debbie brings coffee and goes off to clean up after the men departing the other table, while Johnny settles down comfortably to drink his coffee and talk, as he can do for hours, of the weather and the roads and the grass this fall and the number of cattle trucked out of the country north of the river to be consigned at the sale this morning. "This is a big sale, but you won't see the big sales every week like they had six-eight years ago. Not that many cattle in this country any more. The boys all cut back on yearlings—price of feed what it is, they can't afford to raise cattle—" and while he talks, I think of all the sales Father and I worked together, earning money for the ranch, and the sales I worked with Clay after Father's accident.

I'd be working in the yards myself today, riding old Lightning up and down the center alley and hazing calves through the main gate into the sale barn, if it weren't for Clay. Avoiding Clay means staying away from the Wednesday sales, and driving past the Farmers Union without stopping for gas if his truck is parked by the pumps, and being afraid to walk into the Empire—that's the worst part.

No. The worst part is missing the sales, because of the money.

Johnny is still talking, explaining something that Sim told him about the number of consignments they need every week to keep the cash flow at the yards high enough to pay overhead. He omits no

details, and I can sip coffee and nod as though I am listening to more than every tenth word or so while my thoughts skitter off: *money-money-money*.

Suddenly I wish I could tell Johnny about it. Through the dull flesh that has slipped from the bones of his face into bags and jowls, I can almost not quite see *Johnny*, Johnny with the clean Weir features and blue eyes. How can I tell him anything? He's an old man, older than I am; what does he know? Years ago when we took the same correspondence course, Johnny and I made a game out of the verse quotations that headed every lesson—oh, those lessons were full of knowledge about books. Even more than I, Johnny has grown up in a backwater. I am assuring myself that I cannot possibly tell him anything in the same instant that I hear my own voice blurt, "Johnny, I'm broke!"

Interrupted in the middle of a word, Johnny stares at me. His mouth has gone slack, but his face looks as if it could break into pieces, and I think unwillingly of Father's funeral and how Johnny began to cry at the graveside.

"It must get awful lonesome out there," says Johnny, getting the better of the wobble in his voice.

"Who said anything about lonesome? I'm never lonesome, I wouldn't know what it is to be lonesome!"

Johnny nods. His old man's eyes, faded and inflamed, gaze on me but seem to see something else. "It's a damn fine ranch," he says after awhile.

"The ranch is all that counts with me. All the years Father put into it, and I—"

"Best pastureland in the country," says Johnny. "Too bad you can't make money running cattle any more."

"Johnny. As long as I could work at the stockyards, I could support the ranch. But—" all at once I know I can't go on. Bad enough to make a fool of myself in public without having Johnny in tears. Debbie, arriving with the coffee pot, saves us both by pouring our cups full as if nothing in the world out of the ordinary were going on.

"After all Father and I did for him, took him in when he was too crippled up to work anywhere else—" *and then he took up with that bitch*—have I spoken aloud, when I meant to keep all complaints to myself? My fault, my own fault, I know.

Johnny sets his coffee cup down angrily. "No damn reason why you had to quit. Sim would sooner have you working for him than Clay."

"Yes, but Clay wouldn't have quit." How can I explain that the world has divided into Clay's share and my share? His territory and mine, his friends and mine—and my share keeps shrinking as I let

him take more.

Johnny looks as if he can read the rumors written right across my forehead. "You can't make a dime on it, but the land's worth a lot of money."

"I'd never sell it! It was Father's homestead, and now—"

"Still it can't be the same out there with everybody gone," says Johnny.

Against my will I remember how it used to be when the light in the kitchen meant Mother would be getting supper on the table when Father and I came in from the chores. I couldn't see the place. It would be like selling off Father. Johnny ought to know how it is, he's got a ranch of his own.

"Who gets it when you're gone?" Johnny wants to know. "There's only that nephew of your dad's left in the family."

"Junior? He'll get it eventually, I suppose."

Johnny snorts. "That damn fool. That jackass. I wouldn't want to see you do without a thing, Alberta, I wouldn't care what it was, just to see Junior turn around and sell the place after you're gone."

Johnny bangs his cup down loud enough to make a man buying cigarettes at the counter look our way. I don't know what to say. Of course I could sell. I know who'd buy me out in a minute, and leave me the buildings and the horse pasture in the bargain.

"Hell, Alberta," says Johnny. "We all depend on you too much to have you giving up on us."

I have to laugh to myself. Coming from Johnny, of all people, when I have always known that a better woman would have handled things better. A tiny memory surfaces, of going out to catch Lightning after a 4-H club meeting and finding Debbie sobbing behind the barn

*—Honey, what's wrong? To hear her, I would have thought somebody'd died. But no.*

*—I hate my mother! sobbed Debbie.*

*—Debbie, honey! People don't hate their mothers. I was thinking that Lila would have known what to say to her.*

*—I do. Debbie lifted a pitiful face. I hate mine. I wanted to go with the boys, but my mother told me—tearful gulp—she told me I'm too big! She says no girl my age, no decent woman, hangs around the men and does men's work!*

*—Oh, Debbie—*

I AM JERKED OUT of the reverie by the opening of the door to the street, and this time no glare of sunlight can blind me to his silhouette. Others are with him, they must have taken a break after all—but all I can focus on is that it wasn't disappointment I felt

when it turned out to be Johnny walking into the Empire a little while ago, but relief. What I am feeling now leaves no doubt whatever. At least I don't have to worry about that—

"Of all the places in town the son of a bitch could go to drink coffee," somebody—is it Debbie?—hisses. I am half out of my chair, somehow getting the heel of my boot tangled in the absurd wire folderols on the chair leg, knowing I am red-faced and foolish.

Johnny's hand, horny-handed and embedded with permanent grime, falls on my arm. "What have you got to run off to? Sit down."

"But—"

"Sit down and let that son of a bitch walk out if he wants to!"

I sink back in my chair, more taken aback by Johnny's anger than I am by Clay. His outburst has sent my assumptions flying in jigsaw fragments. As they filter back down and begin to reassemble, I think I could perceive a new pattern if I were not too frightened. *For of course I am guilty—*

Clay glances over his shoulder, laughs loudly, says something to the man next to him and nudges him. The other man's face turns blank, but my gorge is rising and I must run out or be sick—*keep my stinking carcass where he can't be disgusted—*

"You sit there and listen to me, Alberta. I've been hearing how he tracks you around town and runs you out of places, and it's all a lot of nonsense."

"Alberta," says Debbie, and it is toward her voice that I turn. "Don't you remember what you told me the time you found me crying?"

No, I don't remember telling her anything. What I remember is the stricken little girl and the dead certainty that what they accused me of was true. *Not a real woman, not Alberta. If she amounted to anything, she'd fold up and die like her mother. But not her, no, she stays healthy and goes to work right alongside the men. But she'll get what's coming to her. That rodeo hand, that's what's coming to her. Serves her right.* Is it possible that, for once in my life, instead of sinking willingly after the voices into the bog of self-hatred, I went right on saddling Lighting and said, *Work's work, Debbie! Been doing it all my life! Do you see me crying about what people say?*

Clay is standing there grinning, and the sloping line of his shoulders and the muscles of his neck are more familiar than the freckles and the loose skin I am always surprised to notice on my own hands. Three weeks ago I could walk up to Clay and put my hand on his shoulder and feel warm. Now I have to watch that I don't reach out from force of habit, and the very air is divided between us: either his or mine to breathe.

Johnny hasn't budged. His back is turned to Clay, but his eyes

don't spare me. Debbie is still standing behind me, so what can I do but sink back into my chair and pick up my coffee cup, which turns out to be empty? And lightning does not strike me dead, and thunder does not cleave the earth under me and let me fall through. All that happens is that Clay straddles a chair at the opposite table and starts to pick his teeth.

Johnny glares at me. "You just sit still a few times, and he'll quit."

The fragments have reassembled; the picture they form is painful, for all my hours of self-pity will buy nothing back, and nothing is going to happen except that Debbie will fill my empty cup. Still, clarity brings a certain relief.

And Johnny is right. It's not the same out at the ranch now. I think: I could keep the buildings and the horse pasture. Go back to work if I feel like it. And I can stop by Western Wear on the way out of town and have them lay back a down parka. She might as well look like the rest of those young kids that look like they're starting on a month's pack trip instead of on their way to class. Why not, if I'm going to be rich?

## Schuykill County

LOUIS McKEE

The Lenape, with a curse  
tossed to the lake, buried  
their dead on these hills;  
it's their bones we hear  
moving under us. They know  
the water and the winds,  
and they know our weight  
is more than they care for.  
They know love, and they  
have heard the poems  
sounded through the damp  
air and open spaces.  
They know just what we are  
about. They see our every  
move coming: this is  
the reason for the stones  
sore against our backs,  
the chill rattling of bones  
inside us, beneath us.

# poem for John Logan

ANNE MAXWELL

I make up the bed you slept in  
when you stayed, having laundered the sheets  
thinking of it as lines for a poem, wondering  
if you, who surely have made beds before  
would ever use this image

that this palming and smoothing  
and propping of pillow, sheet  
or that, rubbing the dishes dry,  
hand oil laid layer by sheer layer  
upon the plate should make a difference  
fork to mouth, word for word

but it is the nature of everything  
we do, you and I, stroking line  
of the letter t, the l, the arm laying  
one line at a time onto paper  
your lips scooping up again, and again  
those same sounds of l and  
cool t that make this poem speak

and this is the heart of it that  
we bear down into the meat of this language,  
as if gold  
might actually emerge  
in the bottom of the grinding cup

so when the woman comes  
again to the woodwork of the body  
to wash it, to the ceremony of washing:  
skin, knife, as to mortar  
and pestle, this alchemy, comes again  
as you to your pencil strident  
in its effort to transform

that word, that one item, glass,  
bathtowel, and I to my typewriter  
and to this bed where  
under my hand, in a few bad lines  
in the jelly left  
from breakfast near your place, I feel,  
all that turns to gold



# About Frogs

ED KRATZ

**A**LFRED CAME TO, still struggling to break loose, still muttering half-intelligible curses. He soon realized he was bound too securely to escape; to continue to try was useless. "Well, it's finally happened. I'm trapped. And it's Egbert's fault. Curse him."

Anger made him flex and twist and bend futilely against the restraints once again. Eventually he surrendered to his fate, letting the details of his capture gradually come into focus.

He remembered that the woods seemed even more enchanting and beautiful than usual. And that he had no desire to waste such a fine day with a hopeless malcontent like Egbert. However, the others had called a meeting. Since Alfred was the only member who deigned to speak to Egbert at all, it was decided he should be their spokesman in the matter.

The confrontation was not one Alfred looked forward to, so he passed the early morning playing in the lake with several of the more attractive local females. They began by swimming. Soon they were splashing about the water, laughing, totally lost in pleasure, and Alfred was rapidly deciding to abandon any thought of speaking to Egbert. He couldn't bear to ruin such a day.

He didn't have to. Egbert's arrival did that. His heavy presence smothered their pleasure like a blanket. His ponderous voice rolled over their amusement like an ill omen.

"Poor, poor Alfred. You don't realize how wretched you are."

"Wretched!" Alfred felt like screaming. Instead, he decided to try to reason with Egbert. The ladies were already slinking sadly away. "Listen to me," Alfred said desperately.

Egbert grunted. The old fellow had a hearing impairment which seemed to screen out any objections. It made talking with him exasperating, but it kept his opinions intact. "You listen, Alfred. Every day it grows worse."

Alfred groaned, "Worse?"

The ladies were gone.

Egbert continued. "I do not know how much longer we must suffer. But I tell you, I believe with all my heart that someday my prayers will be answered. We shall be saved."

Alfred decided it was time to get to the point. "Cut it out,

Egbert. We know what you've been doing, and we want it stopped."

Egbert appeared genuinely confused. "Why Alfred, whatever can you mean? If it's complaining, well, that can hardly be helped. We . . ."

"It's not your ceaseless objections. Though constantly bewailing our fate does manage to put a damper on even my best days. No, Egbert, what we want stopped is your little project."

"My little . . .?"

"Don't be coy. You've been caught. Seen."

"Seen? Seen at what?"

"I have neither the patience nor the inclination to waste a sunny morning arguing with you. This is an ultimatum—stop trying to reveal our little secret. You're the only subject who is dissatisfied, and what you do for yourself is one thing. But leave the rest of us out of it, or we shall be forced to do something drastic."

"But Alfred, it is for the group that I do this. How much longer can anyone endure this wretched existence? We have no freedom, no courts, no followers, no power."

"You old fool. That is just what we wanted. What you wanted at one time. No power! Do you realize what having no power means to me? It means having mornings free to wake up and follow whatever silly whim I feel. No wars to be riding off to. No hopelessly complicated domestic disputes to settle. No voices crying after me—to solve this problem, to grant one petition, to deny another. No, Egbert. To lie about in the sun, to contemplate the peace of the forest, to pass time in idle meditation, to watch leaping fish in a shimmering stream. That is freedom, that is living."

"Alfred, I'm sorry to discover that you have this attitude. You see, I felt that you, like me, were different from the others. That you understood. But—it's too late. I have already been successful. Any second now . . ."

The last thing Alfred remembered before the net fell over the pair of them and he was plunged into sweltering, stuffy, darkness was swearing eternal vengeance on bumbling, meddlesome Egbert.

**V**IOLENCE WAS STILL NOT far from Alfred's mind as he sullenly pondered how much information the traitor had managed to convey. More than likely someone now knew all the details of their amazing change—and the way to effect the transformation.

"Witches. Curse witches and Egbert, too. Why did there even have to be an antidote?" Alfred had asked that same question the evening he had made the deal. After all the papers were written and the ink was dry on that strange contract, she had added, "There is one small stipulation. I have to tell you about the Way Out."

Alfred had protested. He wanted the change to be final, irrevocable. The witch responded with the usual nonsensical witch's babble, rambling on and on about certain universal laws, equal and opposite magical reactions, using funny words like *newtons*, and citing a million other points that made no sense at all. What it finally amounted to was that there had to be a Way Out, there was always a Way Out, and that was that.

When she explained what the Way Out was, Alfred listened politely, agreeing the idea was excellent, but secretly breathing a deep sigh of relief. He was certain he would be safe. It was one thing to believe in magical powers. It was quite another to think that people might go about kissing frogs—that was distasteful, not to mention perverted.

The witch guessed what he was thinking, and told him as much. Once again she offered an elaborate array of facts concerning her art, patiently explaining that her customer would be an exceptional, special sort of frog, and wandering off into romantic speculation about how the pure vision of the heart could see through any physical disguises.

"Witches. They wouldn't be so bad to deal with if they would just do their job and weren't such garrulous, unbusiness-like creatures."

Alfred's reflections were interrupted by the sight of an incredibly thin, bedraggled looking woman. He glanced up at her, shuddered, and turned to studying his surroundings. He was tied to a lily-pad, in a small pond, in a garden, which, as far as he could see, held more of the same ponds—and prisoners. Everything about the place was well-planned, artificial, so different from the enchanted forest he had known.

The lady spoke. "My poor poor prince. Do not fear. I'll save you. I'll . . ."

A voice whispered, "Lift the curse those wicked witches have placed upon you."

Alfred wanted to shout, "Curse? Curse? Why, we paid to get a bit of peace, a life we could call our own." Unfortunately, to most people a frog's angry screaming may be misinterpreted as anguished pleas for help.

She rushed forward. "I'm coming, darling, darling."

As he watched her approach with trepidation, Alfred noticed something else. Perched on top of the garden's wall, behind her, were groups of open-mouthed, gawking peasants. They were close enough to hear the loudest shouts of the princess, but not close enough to hear the coaching. Alfred understood. All those opportunists and useless charlatans who attached themselves to rulers like lampreys would lose their place with those leaders gone. With the kings aging and dying, or simply retiring, that story about a

curse had to be fabricated to explain the vanished princes. The people could hardly be told that so many beloved heirs preferred the simple pleasures of froghood to impending kingdom.

The princess came very close to Alfred's pond.

"Make it look good."

She bent down dramatically. For a second Alfred felt he was finished. But Egbert happened to be trapped in the same pond, and she picked him instead. She held the frog for a moment, hesitating before kissing him, twisting her lips in an expression of distaste, and then she did it. And there stood Egbert, as pot-bellied, bald-headed, and stoop-shouldered a prince as you'd ever see.

Alfred quickly forgot all thoughts of revenge on his old enemy. From the looks of his bride, he'd been punished enough already. But when he saw the lovely princess who entered the garden next, everything vanished from his mind but her wonderful face. She walked silently, determinedly in his direction, ignoring the hidden voices, now buzzing in protest, "You're not doing it right."

She gently raised Alfred to her face, casting soft brown eyes upon him that seemed to say they understood everything.

She administered the antidote. They were happily continuing the cure when rude lackeys wrenched them apart. Apparently all the frogs in the garden had been transformed; with indecorous brevity someone proclaimed, "You're all married. Now, go and run the kingdoms."

Alfred went back to embracing his wife, thinking, "Maybe being a prince again won't be so bad after all."

They broke for a moment—to stare into each other's eyes. And then it began.

"Your Majesty, I have been wronged."

"Your Majesty, the crops are failing."

"Your Majesty, the rains are not falling."

Alfred screamed, "Silence! I have suffered greatly. For the present I need my rest."

The prime minister, a cunning unscrupulous fellow, took Alfred's arm. "I'm sorry my prince, but there will be no peace this evening. We are at war, and ride tonight."

Alfred asked, "About the witches?" He tried not to appear anxious.

"Ah, we caught them. Punished them. Discovered the nature of their curse, thanks to the efforts of noble Egbert. His intricate hopping, the messages he wrote in the mud. And . . ."

"Enough!" Alfred did not like the way the man looked at him when he said "curse," and he knew what "punishment" meant. He spoke in a bellow, loud enough for everyone to hear so this audacious fellow would have no excuse. "If you happen to find any witches left,

bring them to me. I will question them personally.”

As he took a long, last sad look at his lady, Alfred knew he would do the interrogation himself, privately. He would certainly ask about another transformation, another deal, about the possibility of having two frogs hopping about a more distant, better hidden magical forest. And this time, no matter what the witch might say, no Way Outs, no newtons.

## Old Man at Nightfall

CAROLE STONE

If the wind could ferry  
my bones back,  
then I'd ride on Papa's shoulders  
through fields of barley  
to our timber house  
and the good Russian potatoes  
simmering in the iron kettle.

Falling asleep,  
I'd hear the fire hiss  
like the redbeaked goose  
in the front yard, its open mouth  
ready to swallow.  
“Foolish dumpling,” Mama would coo,  
covering me with the goosedown quilt.

I imagine the souls  
of my Mother and Father  
bending toward me in the dark,  
waiting.  
I cannot let go of my breath.  
They fall into the holes  
that are stars.

# A Wake

TOM OTT

Nightgowned, rouged, perfumed  
as if death were simply  
another night to turn back sheets,  
she looks so much herself, we say,  
she might begin to curse at howling dogs.  
But the captured stillness  
settled at the corners of her mouth  
and eyelids formed like moss  
over random lying stones  
leave only us to wish the dogs away,  
to wish the night away, to wish away  
our praise of suffocating flowers  
and the solemn priest with his circuit of beads.

Dear Death, you make it possible  
that men should weep and women lean  
on unfamiliar arms. You  
gather us to stun old relatives  
with bearded ten years olds  
and pigtailed girls  
whose children's ears are pierced. You  
ban long feuds and wag the tongue of memory  
then lead us one by one to brush your bloodless lips,  
trace the cold of your fingertips,  
or touch the fringes of your cotton bedding.  
Dear Death, the dogs, the night,  
the flowers and the priest will go away,  
and we will go away to settle our diminished lives  
  
until next and next and certainly.



# Contributors

**F**or the fourth time, MARY CLEARMAN appears in our pages, and as usual she is very busy elsewhere too: her story "Forby and the Mayan Maidens" and a review of *Lambing Out* appeared in the Spring *Georgia Review*. KEN GAERTNER lives in Brighton, Michigan, and writes poems and plays as well as stories. Only a Michigander could have written "Running Away to Nothing," but does anybody still believe that there is a distinction between regional writing and *good* writing? J.B. GOODENOUGH lives "a very quiet life in a very small town with husband and children." But our readers will agree with her and Hollis Summers: "adventures and foreign parts are dandy 'for murders and mythologies, but so are the flats of home.'" She's had work accepted in a large number of journals, including *Colorado State Review*, *Hollins Critic*, and *Image*. ED KRATZ is a computer science major at La Salle. He has a B.A. in English from West Chester State College, and has held a number of those jobs (janitor, clerk) that aspiring writers have recourse to. "About Frogs" is his first published story. KONSTANTINOS LARDAS teaches at CCNY; he's published a book of poems, *And In Him, Too: In Us*. ANNE MAXWELL began a long collaboration with poet John Logan when he read at a workshop she attended at La Salle. Since then her poems have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *Hollins Critic*. Another La Salle graduate, LOUIS McKEE is a high school teacher and an active poet and reviewer. TOM OTT has published poems in *The New York Quarterly*, *Nimrod*, and others, as well as here. He teaches at Community College of Philadelphia. SUSAN IRENE REA is a recent contributor and the mother of a ten-month-old child who has been keeping her life very disordered. MARTIN ROBBINS, whose second appearance in our pages this is, has just finished *A Year With Two Winters*, a book of poems and prose poems about Argentina at the time of Peron's return. He is teaching writing classes at Radcliffe. Well, the Phillies made it, and here we pay tribute to our local True Believer, JOHN P. ROSSI. Chairman of the History Department at La Salle, he is the author of numerous articles and a book or two. He also publishes general pieces in places like *Four Quarters* and *Notre Dame Magazine*. CAROLE STONE is Professor of English at Montclair (N.J.) State College. She's had poems in *Southern Poetry Review* and *Beloit Poetry Journal*, and recently published a chapbook, *Legacy* (Swamp Press). JEAN WIGGINS is currently Poet-in-Residence, Alabama Arts Council. Her work has appeared in numerous small-press publications.

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